



National Institute of Standards & Technology

Certificate

Standard Reference Material 4427L, Lot 9 Yttrium-90 Radioactivity Standard

This Standard Reference Material (SRM) consists of radioactive yttrium-90 chloride, non-radioactive yttrium chloride, and hydrochloric acid dissolved in 5 mL of distilled water. The solution is contained in a flame-sealed NIST borosilicate-glass ampoule. The SRM is intended for the calibration of ionization chambers and beta-particle counting instruments.

Radiological Hazard: The SRM ampoule contains yttrium-90 with a total activity of approximately 25 MBq. Yttrium-90 decays by beta-particle emission. Some of the beta-particles escape from the SRM ampoule. During the decay process, X rays and gamma rays with energies from approximately 2 keV to 2.2 MeV are emitted. In addition, the beta particles emitted from yttrium-90 produce bremsstrahlung photons with energies up to 2.3 MeV. Most of these photons escape from the SRM ampoule, and can represent a radiation hazard. Approximate unshielded dose rates at several distances (as of the reference time) are given in note [a]*. Appropriate shielding and/or distance should be used to minimize personnel exposure. The SRM should be used only by persons qualified to handle radioactive material.

Chemical Hazard: The SRM ampoule contains hydrochloric acid with a concentration of approximately 1 mole per liter of water. The solution is corrosive and represents a health hazard if it comes in contact with eyes or skin. If the ampoule is to be opened to transfer the solution, the recommended procedure is given on page 2. The ampoule should be opened only by persons qualified to handle both radioactive material and strong acid solution.

Storage and Handling: The SRM should be stored and used at a temperature between 5 and 65 °C. The solution in an unopened ampoule should remain stable and homogeneous until at least December 2006. The ampoule (or any subsequent container) should always be clearly marked as containing radioactive material. If the ampoule is transported it should be packed, marked, labeled, and shipped in accordance with the applicable national, international, and carrier regulations. The solution in the ampoule is a dangerous good (hazardous material) because of the radioactivity and its acidity.

Preparation: This Standard Reference Material was prepared in the Physics Laboratory, Ionizing Radiation Division, Radioactivity Group, M.P. Unterweger, Acting Group Leader. The overall technical direction and physical measurements leading to certification were provided by D.B. Golas and O.T. Palabrica, Nuclear Energy Institute Research Associates. The support aspects involved in the preparation, certification, and issuance of this SRM were coordinated through the Standard Reference Materials Program.

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Recommended Procedure for Opening the SRM Ampoule

- 1) If the SRM solution is to be diluted, it is recommended that the diluting solution have a composition comparable to that of the SRM solution.
- 2) Wear eye protection, gloves, and protective clothing and work over a tray with absorbent paper in it. Work in a fume hood. In addition to the radioactive material, the solution contains strong acid and is corrosive.
- 3) Shake the ampoule to wet all of the inside surface of the ampoule. Return the ampoule to the upright position.
- 4) Check that all of the liquid has drained out of the neck of the ampoule. If necessary, gently tap the neck to speed the process.
- 5) Holding the ampoule upright, score the narrowest part of the neck with a scribe or diamond pencil.
- 6) Lightly wet the scored line. This reduces the crack propagation velocity and makes for a cleaner break.
- 7) Hold the ampoule upright with a paper towel, a wiper, or a support jig. Position the scored line away from you. Using a paper towel or wiper to avoid contamination, snap off the top of the ampoule by pressing the narrowest part of the neck away from you while pulling the tip of the ampoule towards you.
- 8) Transfer the solution from the ampoule using a pycnometer or a pipet with dispenser handle. NEVER PIPETTE BY MOUTH.
- 9) Seal any unused SRM solution in a flame-sealed glass ampoule, if possible, to minimize the evaporation loss.

See also reference [4]*.

PROPERTIES OF SRM 4427L, Lot 9, Ampoule 1

Certified values

Radionuclide	Yttrium-90
Reference time	1200 EST, 14 October 2005
Massic activity of the solution [b]*	5.115 MBq·g⁻¹
Relative expanded uncertainty (k=2)	0.95% [c] [d]
Solution mass	(5.0889 ± 0.0003) g [e]
Solution density	(1.016 ± 0.002) g·mL⁻¹ at 20 °C [e]

Uncertified values

Physical Properties:			
Source description	Liquid in flame-sealed NIST borosilicate-glass ampoule		
Ampoule specifications	Body outside diameter	(16.5 ± 0.5) mm	
	Wall thickness	(0.60 ± 0.04) mm	
	Barium content	Less than 2.5%	
	Lead-oxide content	Less than 0.02%	
	Other heavy elements	Trace quantities	
Chemical Properties:			
Solution composition	Chemical Formula	Concentration (mol·L ⁻¹)	Mass Fraction (g·g ⁻¹)
	H ₂ O	54	0.96
	HCl	1.0	0.04
	YCl ₃	7 × 10 ⁻⁴	1 × 10 ⁻⁴
	⁹⁰ YCl ₃	3 × 10 ⁻⁹	6 × 10 ⁻¹⁰
Radiological Properties:			
Beta-particle-emitting impurities	Strontium-90: (0.3 ± 0.1) Bq·g ⁻¹ [e]		
Photon-emitting impurities	None detected [f]		
Half lives used	Hydrogen-3: (12.32 ± 0.02) a [g] [5] Yttrium-90: (64.00 ± 0.21) h [g] [5]		
Calibration method and measuring instrument(s)	Three 4πβ liquid-scintillation counting systems. The detection efficiencies were calculated using the CIEMAT/NIST method with hydrogen-3 as the detection-efficiency monitor. [h]		

EVALUATION OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE MASSIC ACTIVITY [c] [d]*

Input Quantity x_i , the source of uncertainty (and individual uncertainty components where appropriate)	Method Used To Evaluate $u(x_i)$, the standard uncertainty of x_i (A) denotes evaluation by statistical methods (B) denotes evaluation by other methods	Relative Uncertainty Of Input Quantity, $u(x_i)/x_i$, (%) [i]	Relative Sensitivity Factor, $ \partial y/\partial x_i \cdot$ (x_i/y) [j]	Relative Uncertainty Of Output Quantity, $u_i(y)/y$, (%) [k]
Dilution of two ampoules of SRM 4427L to make two lower- level solutions and two sets of liquid-scintillation (LS) vials	Standard deviation of the mean result (typical) for the LS measurements for each dilution (A)	0.07	1.0	0.07
Within counter LS measurement counting precision	Standard deviation of the mean result (typical) for 10 sets of LS measurements on a single set of LS vials in the same LS counter (A)	0.04	1.0	0.04
Between counter LS measurement counting precision	Standard deviation of the mean result of LS measurements on two sets of LS vials counted in three different LS counters (A)	0.38	1.0	0.38
Effect of hydrogen-3 activity uncertainty on computed efficiency tracing detection efficiency	Combined standard uncertainty of the massic activity (A)	0.42	0.0021	0.001
Decay corrections for: hydrogen-3 yttrium-90	Standard uncertainty of the half life (A)	0.16 [m] 0.33 [m]	3×10^{-6} [n] 0.64 [n]	4×10^{-7} 0.21
Gravimetric measurements	Estimated (B)	0.10	1.0	0.10
Live time [p]	Estimated (B)	0.10	1.0	0.10
Beta-particle-emitting impurities	Estimated (B) [q]	10.	0.0000002	0.000002
Computed detection efficiency for yttrium-90	Estimated (B) [h]	0.11	1.0	0.11
Relative Combined Standard Uncertainty of the Output Quantity, $u_c(y)/y$, (%)				0.48
Coverage Factor, k				$\times 2$
Relative Expanded Uncertainty of the Output Quantity, U/y , (%)				0.95

NOTES

- [a] The Sievert is the SI unit for dose equivalent. See reference [1]. One μSv is equal to 0.1 mrem.
 Distance from Ampoule (cm): 1 30 100
 Approximate Dose Rate ($\mu\text{Sv/h}$): 24000 130 5
- [b] **Massic activity** is the preferred name for the quantity activity divided by the total mass of the sample. See reference [1].
- [c] The reported value, y , of massic activity (activity per unit mass) at the reference time was not measured directly but was derived from measurements and calculations of other quantities. This can be expressed as $y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots, x_n)$, where f is a mathematical function derived from the assumed model of the measurement process. The value, x_i , used for each input quantity i has a **standard uncertainty**, $u(x_i)$, that generates a corresponding uncertainty in y , $u_i(y) \equiv |\partial y / \partial x_i| \cdot u(x_i)$, called a **component of combined standard uncertainty** of y . The **combined standard uncertainty** of y , $u_c(y)$, is the positive square root of the sum of the squares of the components of combined standard uncertainty. The combined standard uncertainty is multiplied by a **coverage factor** of $k = 2$ to obtain U , the **expanded uncertainty** of y .
- Since it can be assumed that the possible estimated values of the massic activity are approximately normally distributed with approximate standard deviation $u_c(y)$, the unknown value of the massic activity is believed to lie in the interval $y \pm U$ with a level of confidence of approximately 95 percent.
- For further information on the expression of uncertainties, see references [2] and [3].
- [d] The value of each component of combined standard uncertainty, and hence the value of the expanded uncertainty itself, is a best estimate based upon all available information, but is only approximately known. That is to say, the "uncertainty of the uncertainty" is large and not well known. This is true for uncertainties evaluated by statistical methods (e.g., the relative standard deviation of the standard deviation of the mean for the massic response is approximately 50%) and for uncertainties evaluated by other methods (which could easily be over estimated or under estimated by substantial amounts). The unknown value of the expanded uncertainty is believed to lie in the interval $U/2$ to $2U$ (i.e., within a factor of 2 of the estimated value).
- [e] The stated uncertainty is two times the standard uncertainty.
- [f] Estimated limits of detection for photon-emitting impurities, as of 17 October 2005 (3 days after the reference time), expressed as massic photon emission rates, are:
 $2 \times 10^2 \text{ s}^{-1} \cdot \text{g}^{-1}$ for energies between 30 keV and 1750 keV, and
 $3 \times 10^1 \text{ s}^{-1} \cdot \text{g}^{-1}$ for energies between 1750 keV and 2600 keV.
- [g] The stated uncertainty is the standard uncertainty. See reference [5].
- [h] The relationship between the detection efficiency for yttrium-90 and the detection efficiency for hydrogen-3 was computed using the CIEMAT/NIST method as embodied in the computer program EFFY4. See references [6,7,8].
- [i] Relative standard uncertainty of the input quantity x_i .
- [j] The relative change in the output quantity y divided by the relative change in the input quantity x_i . If $|\partial y / \partial x_i| \cdot (x_i/y) = 1.0$, then a 1% change in x_i results in a 1% change in y . If $|\partial y / \partial x_i| \cdot (x_i/y) = 0.05$, then a 1% change in x_i results in a 0.05% change in y .

- [k] Relative component of combined standard uncertainty of output quantity y , rounded to two significant figures or less. The relative component of combined standard uncertainty of y is given by $u_i(y)/y \equiv |\partial y/\partial x_i| \cdot u(x_i)/y = |\partial y/\partial x_i| \cdot (x_i/y) \cdot u(x_i)/x_i$. The numerical values of $u(x_i)/x_i$, $|\partial y/\partial x_i| \cdot (x_i/y)$, and $u_i(y)/y$, all dimensionless quantities, are listed in columns 3, 4, and 5, respectively. Thus, the value in column 5 is equal to the value in column 4 multiplied by the value in column 3. The input quantities are independent, or very nearly so. Hence the covariances are zero or negligible.
- [m] The relative standard uncertainty of $\lambda \cdot t$ is determined by the relative standard uncertainty of λ (i.e., of the half life). The relative standard uncertainty of t is negligible.
- [n] $|\partial y/\partial x_i| \cdot (x_i/y) = |\lambda \cdot t|$
- [p] The live time is determined by counting pulses from a gated crystal-controlled oscillator.
- [q] The standard uncertainty given is for the detected impurity. $|\partial y/\partial x_i| \cdot (x_i/y) = \{(\text{response per Bq of impurity})/(\text{response per Bq of yttrium-90})\} \cdot \{(\text{Bq of impurity})/(\text{Bq of yttrium-90})\}$.

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